

Adding Whole Grains to Your Child and Adult Care Food Program Menu

Whole grain-rich foods are an important part of your menu in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Foods that are whole grain-rich are filled with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients that help kids and adults stay healthy.

How often do I have to serve whole grains in the CACFP?

Each day, at least one of the grain components of a meal or snack must be “whole grain-rich.” Whole grain-rich food items must be offered at least once per day, not once per meal/snack. In the CACFP, whole grain-rich means that at least half the grain ingredients in a food are whole grains, and any remaining grains are enriched grains, bran, or germ. This is required for CACFP child and adult meal patterns only. There is no whole grain-rich requirement for infants.



If you serve meals and snacks to the same group of children or adults during the day:

- ✓ Serve whole grain-rich items for the grain component at one of the meals or snack each day.

If you serve meals and snacks to different groups of children or adults during the same day (for example, morning and afternoon sessions):

- ✓ Serve whole grain-rich items for the grain component to one of the groups of children or adults each day.

If you serve only snacks:

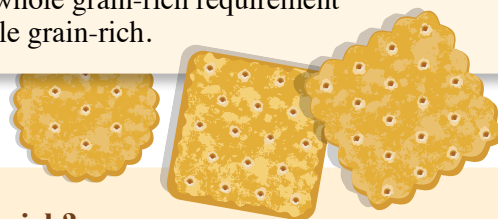
- ✓ You do not have to serve a grain component at snack. But if you do, it must be whole grain-rich.

If you serve only breakfast and want to serve a meat or meat alternate:

- ✓ You do not need to serve a grain, because you are replacing the grain component with a meat or meat alternate. You may do this up to three times per week. On the days when a meat or meat alternate is not served, you must serve whole grain-rich items for the grain component. If you decide to serve a grain as an “extra” food that does not count toward the CACFP meal pattern requirements, then the grain does not have to be whole grain-rich.

If your at-risk afterschool site or adult day care serves breakfast, lunch, or supper using Offer Versus Serve:

- ✓ All grain items offered at the meal you wish to count towards the whole grain-rich requirement must be whole grain-rich.



Can I serve a grain-based dessert if it is whole grain-rich?

- ✗ Grain-based desserts, even those made with whole grains, cannot count towards the grain component of a CACFP meal or snack. There are many other tasty whole grain-rich foods that you can add to your menus.

What are some ways to serve whole grain-rich foods at meals and snacks?

The requirement is that whole grain-rich food items must be offered at least once per day. But, you may choose to offer whole grain-rich food items more often. Check out these easy ways to serve whole grain-rich foods:

Breakfast	Lunch/Supper	Snacks
☐ Oatmeal* ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Pancakes or Waffles ☐ Toast Made with Whole-Wheat Bread ☐ Whole Grain-Rich English Muffin, Bagel, or Biscuit ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Muffin ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Cereal*	☐ Whole-Wheat Macaroni or Spaghetti ☐ Brown Rice ☐ Quinoa ☐ Bulgur ☐ Wild Rice ☐ Whole-Wheat Bun or Roll ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Pizza Crust ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla	☐ Whole Grain-Rich Crackers ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Pita Triangles ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Cereal Mix* ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Pretzels ☐ Rice Cakes Made with Brown Rice ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Banana Bread ☐ Whole Grain-Rich Chips

*Cereal must meet CACFP sugar limits.

How can I share information about whole grain-rich foods on my menu?

Some easy ways CACFP providers are highlighting whole grains on their menus include:



Writing “whole wheat” or “WW” in front of an item on the menu, such as “whole-wheat bread” or “WW bread.”

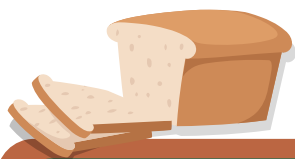


Adding a fun grain icon or picture next to whole grain-rich foods.



Placing a check in a checkbox to show that a food is whole grain-rich.

There are no Federal CACFP requirements that you label which foods are whole grain-rich on your menu. Check with your State agency or sponsoring organization to see what they require. Highlighting whole grain-rich foods on your menu communicates to families how you are providing nutritious foods to their loved ones. Families may see this as a sign of the quality of meals and snacks you are offering.



Try It Out!

Look at the menus for three CACFP sites below. Which menus meet the CACFP requirement for whole grain-rich?

Menu 1

Served at a child care center that serves one group of children in the morning and another in the afternoon

Breakfast: Chopped strawberries, whole grain-rich waffles, 1% milk

Lunch: Baked chicken, 1% milk, broccoli, orange wedges, white rice

Snack: Apple slices and string cheese

Menu 2

Served at an at-risk afterschool center that only serves snack

Snack: Enriched pretzels and hummus (bean dip)

Menu 3

Served at an at-risk afterschool center that only serves snack

Snack: Celery sticks and sunflower seed butter

Answer Key: Menus 1 and 3 meet the CACFP requirement for whole grain-rich. Menu 2 does not meet the CACFP meal pattern requirement for whole grain-rich. Because the center only serves snacks, any grains served at snack must be whole grain-rich. The pretzels in this snack are enriched, not whole grain-rich, so this snack does not meet the requirement.

